TRANSCRIPT

Spring 2020 Sussman Lecture ft. Dr. Jean-Baptiste Richardier  
March 11, 2020  
Sheslow Auditorium, Drake University

*This transcript was derived from a Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) of the event and may not be a totally verbatim record.*

>> MR. JONES: Hello. My name is Joseph Jones, Executive Director of The Harkin Institute here at Drake University. Good evening and thank you for being here. Dr. Jean‑Baptiste, Richardier, merci. Now we're at the end of my Louisiana public education.

[ Laughter ]

I'll go back to English. I'd like to thank all of you for being here and for braving what's happening in the world. I'd like to thank President Martin and Provost Mattison for being here as well and thank our longtime friends and benefactors, Richard Sussman, for his contribution to making this lecture possible here at Drake throughout the year. This is a particularly special Sussman Lecture for us because it kicks off public programming celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This is particularly important to us ‑‑

[ Applause ]

‑‑ it's particularly important to us at The Harkin Institute because as you know, Senator Harkin is the author of the civil rights legislation signed into law in 1990 by George H.W. Bush. The ADA is grassroots advocacy at its finest. Individuals within the disability community took to the streets, chaining together wheelchairs to block traffic in D.C. and crawling up the steps of the Capitol to demonstrate the discrimination they faced every day.

Thirty years later, it's hard to remember what our society was like before the ADA before closed captioning and curb cuts were commonplace. Today those things aren't thought of as accommodations. They are expectations. The ADA generation with those with disabilities born after 1990 has grown up under the ADA where access and inclusion are the norm, not an expectation. Signs of improvement in inclusion are all around us, but there's still lots of work to do.

As we reflect on the first 30 years of the ADA, we must also look ahead to the next 30 and what that means for individuals with disabilities. It's our goal that this expectation of full inclusion be commonplace in the United States and across the globe.

How many of you noticed our building that's under construction over there at 20th & University?

[ Applause ]

We're excited about that. Trust me, we're monitoring the progress daily. We're excited to have a physical space at The Harkin Institute that matches the caliber of work that all of our team is doing every day. In addition to all the celebrating, we're preparing to publish a report for women with disabilities before, during and after pregnancy.

[ Applause ]

We continue all the best practices in accessibility such as live captioning our events. And we're gathering insights from all corners of the disability community and the country at large to create an ambitious disability policy agenda for the next 30 years. And, of course, we continue to do our work to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities as well.

This event is also significant because we get to share with special guests, Dr. Jean‑Baptiste Richardier, a renowned doctor, humanitarian and founder of Humanity & Inclusion – formerly known as Handicap International – and an invaluable partner in our disability work.

Also, tonight, we have the privilege of having the Chair of our National Advisory Council and former Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court, Marsha Ternus, leading the moderated discussion with Dr. Richardier.

We had the honor of joining Dr. Richardier and the Humanity & Inclusion team in Paris, France, last year when they hosted our Harkin International Employment Summit for the first time overseas, and it was a wonderful time. And if any of you are looking for a retiree who may have been in the Senate for 30 years who also knows good places to eat in France, you know who you should call or email.

[ Laughter ]

He was a great tour guide for us while we were there, but we really got to tour parts of the world we had not previously. Believe me, he knows every place that serves the best food in all of Paris. Dr. Richardier shared the history of humanitarian work in many of the same parts of the world to include work by former Governor and Drake alumni Robert Ray. I'm excited that my friend Scott Raecker is here to share more about Governor Ray's humanitarian work.

But first, one housekeeping event and reminder. This evening we're going to take questions from the audience via text. So, at any point you have questions tonight, you can send them to 515‑717‑0656. We also have index cards available if you'd like to write the question down. We ask that you send texts if you can.

So now on to the main event. Scott Raecker is the Executive Director of the Robert Ray Center. The Ray Center's mission is to improve civility through casualty development and leadership. To this end the Ray Center is the global home of the initiative that serves over 8 million young people. From the preschool environment to the corporate courtroom, the Ray Center works to transform lives and strengthen communities by equipping individuals and communities to embrace and practice good character, resulting in positive environment stability and principal decision‑making.

He also served as a 14‑year member of the House where he chaired several committees including the House Appropriations Committee, Ethics Committee and the Midwest Council of Governments Legislative Leadership Institute. So, at this time it's my pleasure to introduce Scott Raecker and Justice Ternus and Dr. Richardier to the stage.

[ Applause ]

>> SCOTT RAECKER: Thank you, Joseph, for your kind introduction and for your friendship. Joseph and I meet regularly and are so thrilled to both be here at Drake University. I'd also like to thank former Chief Justice Ternus for your distinguished service to our state and privilege of serving in the Legislature during your terms, and I wanted you to know how much I value how you shaped the Iowa we live in today and also for continuing to raise awareness to the important issues that deserve our attention through your work on the National Advisory Council, The Harkin Institute and Sussman Lecture Series.

Drake is proud to host both the Ray Center and The Harkin Institute as a critical element of this institution's mission.

Former Governor Ray believed that if we could enhance our leadership and our character competencies, that one of the outcomes of that would be enhanced civility in both individual actions and collective responsibilities. This belief was deeply rooted in both Governor and Mrs. Ray's life work and experiences as exemplary models of character, ethical leadership, and civility themselves. These attributes are just one of the many connections that they share with our distinguished guest this evening.

Another connection that Governor and Mrs. Ray share with our notable speaker is their passion for improving the world for those less fortunate, most especially refugees and their uniquely significant challenges. Governor Ray signed a waiver from the United States Department of State and President Ford in 1975 to have the refugees relocated to Iowa. And in 1979, he was again on the world stage of refugee relocation.

Following the CBS special with Ed Bradley on "The Boat People," Governor Ray recalled ‑‑ and I quote ‑‑ "what was happening was tragic. These frail little boats with people trying to save their lives and get away were breaking apart, and people were dying. And you could see them right there on the screen. And once again, I thought, we've got to do something to help that situation."

With Governor Ray's leadership as a catalyst, President Carter and Vice President Mondale called for the conference on Southeast Asian refugees that took place in Geneva, Switzerland. Governor Ray took a prominent role in that conference, which led to America opening their doors again and showing their dedication to the humanitarian efforts of refugee relocation by offering 168,000 refugee spots in the United States, many of whom came to Iowa. That was followed by over 600,000 refugees relocated worldwide through that one conference from one Governor in this state saying that something needed to be done.

In October of 1979, Governor and Mrs. Ray visited several refugee camps in Thailand on a return trip from China. At one of the camps, Governor Ray recalled ‑‑ and I quote again ‑‑ we walked in this little hut, and inside there on the wall was this roadmap from the state of Iowa. It had little pins where people had been relocated and resettled into the state of Iowa. Iowa was then viewed as those refugees' place of hope in the world.

They also made a visit to a new refugee camp in Thailand just over the border from war‑torn Cambodia. There they witnessed horrible living conditions, starvation, and even death. Once again, Governor Ray and Mrs. Ray responded to what they saw. When the Rays arrived back in Des Moines in October, they were met by the local press. Governor Ray talked about what he had seen and shared with the Des Moines Register photos that he had taken of the camps. He had hoped that Iowans would be able to do something to help these refugees before they could be relocated. The coverage of the camps prompted responses from all across Iowa and our civic life, government, business, media, and faith communities all came together to help.

Michael Gartner, then Editor and President of the Des Moines Register and an integral part of the Harkin National Advisory Council, got the newspaper involved with the fundraising, and Iowans gave generously of their financial support and food and medicine to help these refugees. It was delivered and arrived on Christmas Day in 1979, and that was the birth of Iowa Shares.

So, when refugees on the other side of the world needed help, Governor and Mrs. Ray were humanitarian leaders, and they mobilized other leaders to help the cause. When it would have been easy to turn away from those with trouble, especially the refugees, Governor and Mrs. Ray led Iowa and the world in helping refugees.

And that is a direct correlation with our distinguished guest this evening. Dr. Jean‑Baptiste Richardier. Dr. Richardier founded Humanity & Inclusion, formerly known as Handicap International, while working to support Cambodian refugees along the Thai border in 1982. At the time, Dr. Richardier and his wife were outraged that 6,000 refugees had been maimed by antipersonnel landmines, saved by surgeons but then offered no specific assistance as they left the hospital, often within days of having endured such a physical and emotional trauma. Dr. Richardier called in his brother‑in‑law and wife to help, and together they created HI's very first rehabilitation centers in the refugee camp along the border.

In 1992, under Dr. Richardier's leadership, HI joined forces with five other nongovernmental organizations to form the international campaign to ban landmines, which was collectively awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997. Later HI was at the forefront of the cluster munition coalition successfully advocating to ban this type of weapon and works today towards the regulation and use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in densely populated areas. Dr. Richardier served as director of communication and development as head of the mine policy at HI's headquarters in Lyon, France. Before taking over as director general of Humanity & Inclusion in 2003 and becoming CEO and Humanity & Inclusion federation in 2009. Since 1994, he has guided the entry of HI and a small group of nongovernment at organizations directly engaged in operational mine clearance. Dr. Richardier has also coordinated HI's international development which created new national associations in Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg, Canada, United Kingdom, and the United States.

After completing his medical studies in 1977, Dr. Richardier worked as a journalist for Medically Daily before departing for two years for alternative service in Ethiopia. Afterward, he worked as a volunteer doctor in Thailand. Before taking over his responsibilities at the headquarters of the French section of Handicap International in 1983, he undertook multiple missions in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Pakistan to develop the organization's first programs.

It is these types of experiences that both Dr. Richardier and Governor and Mrs. Ray experienced these life‑changing experiences in a place like a Cambodian refugee camp that leads to life‑altering and life passion work that we are going to hear about tonight.

Today Humanity & Inclusion is present in 55 countries, serving people living in areas of conflict, providing victim assistance and clearing landmines. Over time it has extended its mandate to serve people hurt by natural catastrophes or stricken by extreme poverty. He retired from Humanity & Inclusion in 2016 and remains administrator of the international review, Humanitarian Alternatives, which he's co‑founded. He devotes his time, experience and energy to a newly established international initiative, United Against Inhumanity, whose aim is to invite civil society to refuse what's witnessed in today's conflict.

And I hope you can see in this introduction why Drake is so proud to have the The Harkin Institute and the Ray Center as part of the mission of this institution because it brings together people such as Dr. Richardier that the vision and mission that he has experienced and demonstrated and impacting the lives of others, refugees, refugee relocations, refugee support and enhancements and now his work in civility.

Please, again, help me welcome our special guest and our moderating interviewer, the former Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court and Dr. Jean‑Baptiste Richardier. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Good evening. Thank you all so much for coming out tonight. \The topic that we're going to be discussing is so important. It's so far removed from Iowa, but it's really something we should all care about. Before we get into that, I'm going to do a little disclaimer because I wasn't supposed to be up here until a few hours ago. And Senator and Mrs. Harkin probably made the wise decision to not fly here this morning. So, I do have some remarks that I know Tom wanted to deliver, and I'm going to do that for him. The Harkin Institute has been very fortunate to have an incredibly strong partner and ally in Humanity & Inclusion on the issue of disability employment. HI ‑‑ and I know at first that confused me because Harkin Institute has the same initials ‑‑ but when I use HI tonight, I'm talking about Humanity & Inclusion. HI has been involved in the planning and execution of the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, not just last year when it was in Paris but since the first summit was held in Washington, D.C., in 2016. I know that Senator Harkin was delighted that you hosted the first summit not in the U.S., and I know he thought it was very successful. He wanted me to mention that he had the opportunity to visit HI headquarters in Lyon. I'm terrible at French, which he already knows. We've been through this. And he was very impressed with your organization and enjoyed talking to you.

Tom considers it a privilege to work with HI, and I know I speak on behalf of him and myself and the audience that we're really honored to have you here in Des Moines. Your work has been so fantastic. And I'm happy that it's been recognized on so many levels. I got on the website this afternoon to learn a little bit more, and they have been recognized not only with the Nobel Peace Prize but several other awards for the fantastic work that they do. And I'm excited to hear more about it tonight. So, okay. To start the discussion, can you just tell us a little ‑‑ we heard just a little bit about how you got involved in the work that you did, but I think it was in 1982 in Cambodia. Can you tell us a little bit more about what prompted you to make this your life's work?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Okay. Thank you for all these nice words. Thank you to be here despite the ambience. Obviously, I'm very glad to be here. However, I hope I can take my plane tomorrow. I knew about Senator Harkin's special involvement, but I came here, and I discovered the Robert Ray and Billie's work on The Boat People in particular, so it seems to be a tradition in Iowa for openness to some sort of tragedy and there are consequences and the necessity to take a share about it. So, I like that very much. But talking about my motivation, I think I’d just briefly like to mention about my family environment. I am from a family of 10 kids. I mean, being in a family of 10 teaches you a lot of ‑‑ well, questions and solutions about living together and openness to the outside world. And on top of that, my parents usually welcomed ‑‑ permanently I had either an African or an Asian person being a refugee and being at home. So, they were very nice people. I was very curious to know about their country. At the onset, I was interested about that.

I also spent the first eight years of my life in a tiny village where my parents were during the war, World War II. That was common in France in those days. And that village was kept from the rest of the world up to four months during winter because of the snow. It was closed. And we had no electricity. So, just to mention that the first eight years of my life were tainted by this sense of fragility and also the necessary frugality in life, and it also helped me later on to understand whenever I would go travel to a village in a remote part of Laos or anywhere, I could sympathize easily with the concern, probably.

Also, I want to mention the fact that early on, my mother offered me ‑‑ she started with the story of Tom Dula. That marked me very, very strongly when I was young. Later on ‑‑ I think I have the cover of this. Where do I point? Anywhere? Yeah, this is a picture of Tom Dula. I found his story very fascinating. And the second book she offered me was The Citadel. I realize now that it was one of the first‑ever series digging into ethics of medicine at a time where it was not so familiar. So that influenced me a lot. And just a little ‑‑ I also mention that my father was kind of a pacifist, and he kept talking to me about the words ‑‑ the memorial monument for dead soldiers in our cemetery close to our village where it was written, against the war to its victims, to the brotherhood of peoples, and may the future console the pain. And I tell you, this is totally unusual on memorials for dead soldiers.

But the bulk of my motivation come from my first mission, which was Doctors Without Borders on the Thai/Cambodian border. And that was where I ‑‑ well, I was in a situation. I worked in the O.B. ward for one year. Every morning when the curfew lifted, I could see the ambulances bringing the wounded people from the day before. They had to wait in the ambulances overnight. Some were dead. Some were still alive. And they were rushed to the surgery ward. And among them, there was an average of maybe 10, 15, 20 new amputees every week, amputees from landmines. And I would, like any other member of this operation, which was the most formidable human matter of the last century, there were more or less 3 million people standing along the border and up to 700, 800 expatriates to care for them.

But amazingly, I don't know, I discovered that in the field, it was considered that it was the wisdom of the time. That the situation was not conducive to properly care for people ‑‑ special care for people with disabilities. Therefore, the wisdom of the time decided to do nothing. So, we had the cream of the cream of specialists in all fields but in rehabilitation. Can you believe that? And everybody was considering that until such a point that they could see.

We discovered later on that there were 6,000 amputees by landmines in these encampments and having the Khao‑I‑Dang Camp as the hospital. So, they were visible everywhere, of course, around wherever there would be food or basic needs, water, shelter, so they were with their crutches and everybody, to be honest was ‑‑ sorry about the word, but all members of this humanitarian endeavor ‑‑ they were pissed off because they did not understand why, for God's sake, there wouldn't be a solution for them.

And, you know, when you are a young doctor, you don't know, especially when you're in the situation. I was not a rehab specialist. I said, well, there must be good reason for that. I was like everybody, I couldn't understand, and I was revolted. There was an absolute need to do something. And now I'm going to show you a few pictures. This is the kind of environment you could ‑‑ I mean, I was talking about 3 million people. So that's just a sample. From a closer look, people arrived in a very poor shape because it was the rainy season, and the Thai military kept them away from Thailand for three months, at least, during that summer. And in the end, they accepted them. This is the first‑ever ‑‑ this is when we decided to create Operation Handicap International.

Why operation? You know why? Because we loved the name of an NGO called Operation California. So, I love the use of the word "operation," and we sticked it to Handicap International. Okay. That was the first logo. This picture ‑‑ I don't know if you see very well from the distance, but his body is full of shrapnel. And, in fact, he had two other brothers. And the three of them were maimed by a landmine that exploded, and that landmine had been placed by their uncle to protect a pile of wood.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: By the uncle?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: The uncle protected the wood. But just that tells you how urgent it was to rein on this weapon that was disseminated in the human crisis created by landmine was such that even private people would make use of it.

So, this is the ward where we had amputees arriving. This is our first workshop with all of our customers, clients, as you say. Let me introduce you to my wife, Marie, was with me for all this time. So, this is the first kids we fitted with prosthetics. And this is when they had to go back to the border because they would be welcome in Khao‑I‑Dang until a certain time. And when they were sufficiently fit, we would have to bring them back to the border. So that was a bit painful.

This is Claude, my colleague and co‑founder of Handicap International. On the face of the young lady on the mattress ‑‑ you will see her later on in Geneva. You will understand how important that person has been for us because she has become an ambassador of the fight for the rights of people with ‑‑ suffering from an amputation from that kind of weapon. So, the first thing we did was to enter the ‑‑ am I already there? Okay. I think that's your turn.

[ Laughter ]

>> MARSHA TERNUS: All right. I think what we were going to have you talk a little bit about, after explaining how you had come to establishing Handicap International, which is now ‑‑

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Humanity & Inclusion.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: ‑‑ Humanity & Inclusion. That organization joined together with other NGOs to found the international campaign to ban landmines in 1982. So, I take it it wasn't enough to just help victims, but you decided something had to be done so that we don't have all these victims from landmines.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: You know what? I'm sorry. I made a mistake.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: You've already talked about it, haven't you? No?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Because I was supposed to show you a film, actually. A little film because after we worked along the Cambodian border, we immediately after jumped into the refugee city of refugees in Afghanistan.

(Video shown)

>> NARRATOR: In Afghanistan every year more than 1,000 people are killed or injured by landmines and other explosive weapons left behind after more than 30 years of conflict. At least half of these victims are children. This is just one of these children. Now he is old. He was injured by a landmine two years ago.

When the explosion happened, the little boy was with his grandfather who was killed by the blast. He was taken to hospital in the nick of time, but the doctors couldn't save his injured leg, which was already infected. The young boy had to have an amputation. He went to the physical rehabilitation center set up by Handicap International in the hospital. Our team specialists took his measurements, created the mold to fit him, and he got his first prosthetic leg.

Today, he has come to get a new leg. His original one is now too small, and he has to come back every year to get fitted for a new one. He tries it on so he can make any final adjustments, and then he tries it out to make sure he can walk and get over any obstacles without any discomfort. According to his father, his artificial leg has changed everything.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: So, sorry, back to your question. The international campaign to ban landmines. When you see that kind of ‑‑ not only the fate of individuals but the magnitude of the problem, 10,000 a year. So, at some point being a doctor, you know, you intend to have some public health reaction. If there is such a dramatic situation, it must be closed, and there's a close in which one could have a role. But, you know, this is business. Usually the politicians and the military does not accept to talk about it.

So, we were at this point in time. I remember one fellow telling us when it was a question of returning the refugees, Cambodian refugees to their homeland, no preparatory work was made for clearing the mine. And he told me ‑‑ he told everybody ‑‑ yes, eventually Cambodia will be cleared of mines, one leg at a time. And that was ‑‑ that famous quote cost him his position. He was immediately fired, I can tell you. In the meantime, we were developing a feeling that by ‑‑ well, offering a solution to the ordeal imposed on Syrians by the mine crisis, that we were also offering sort of humanization of a way of doing the war that was not acceptable. And that the politicians should be faced with a responsibility to respect the international loan, international humanitarian loan.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Were landmines banned or were they illegal ‑‑

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Of course, they are illegal because they are hidden in the ground, and they are victim activated. So, in other words, you yourself trigger what will explode your leg. This is totally illegal according to the law of war.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: And were all countries doing this? I'm thinking of the United States?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well, the militaries would say, we behave. We place them, and we retrieve them. The French would say the same. All militaries would pretend that. ut when there is a war, there is always a winner and one which ‑‑ who is defeated. And the one which is defeated usually flee in panic. And I tell you they will not retrieve their mines. They will leave them in place.

So anyway, one day we met a guy, Ray McGraw. If you have time, Google this guy. He came to us and said, well, NGOs must do something because the so‑called collateral damages is bullshit. You NGOs, you must mobilize yourself. So he was so convincing that in the end, I managed to convince Handicap International to become involved at first in mine risk education and later on in mine clearance but not the military clearance which is a bridge in France to have the soldiers pass through. No. Humanitarian mine clearance means that you render the field to the villagers for safety. That means that you have to clear all the mines, and this is a terribly complicated endeavor.

Before I show you a few pictures of this, we also joined the Survey Action Center because after the treaty, the international community was scratching its head to say, how do we deal with the problem? We don't know where to start. And an American Quaker, Bob Eaton, created the center, in other words, to produce mapping of the perceived threat by the villagers in all countries polluted with mines. So that was a formidable breakthrough. He registered as an American charity, and I was the President of that charity for 10 years. So, I was President of an American NGO.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: You briefly mentioned the Iowa Convention, and I didn't know what that was, and I don't think maybe the audience does either.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: I'm going to go back to that. First, I'll show you some practical work. This is the mine risk education. It tells you the fascination of kids for weaponry but also that's the best time to tell them how dangerous it is. So, this is in Africa, of course, obviously. This is in Chad. How important it is to tell people, don't touch. I'll show you something I have in my pocket, by the way. This is typically the kind of things that children will pick up on the ground. You could define it as a terribly dangerous fuse for a big weapon. I picked that up in Maine the other day. It's just an electricity plug or whatever. But, you know, this illustrates very much how much they can be tempted to pick up on the ground what will blow up their hands and their legs. Anyway, they are the preferred victims of that kind of work.

So, this is myself in white in the middle of our first de‑mining team in Cambodia. So, I paid a visit to them because, really, they needed to be encouraged. This is also ‑‑ this is in Lebanon. I will tell you more about it later on. We made a study on de‑mining dogs because all the de‑miners were very afraid to trust the dog and to follow a dog in the minefield. So, we made an in‑depth study to demonstrate that the capacity of the dog was way beyond what was required to ensure safety. And that was a breakthrough.

This is mine clearance, I guess. I don't remember where it was. Maybe Laos. This is ‑‑ yeah. This is an explosion after we had identified ‑‑ we put all the munition in the same spot, and we explode them for good.

This is in Colombia. It shows you how difficult the terrain can be because when you have mines scattered in such a location, you have to consider every little twig as a possible threat to pull mines to explode. It's very dangerous. And look at that person. It's a woman. And this is another woman in Senegal. And this is yet another woman in Laos. This is to say that women are probably the best de‑miners because they are not daring to face danger, you know, like testosterone sometimes pushes males to do. They are mothers. They are very careful. They are very disciplined. And we never had any accident with women de‑miners. So this is ‑‑ they're probably more attached to the mines than the men might be. We have a lot of women de‑miners. Okay. This is after. So please, the little film on Laos. Oh, no. Yeah. Okay. Go ahead. And after I'll say a few words about it.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Okay.

(Video shown)

>> DR. RICHARDIER: So, a few words about the process. Actually, it's something that wouldn't have been possible during the cold war. It was after the fall of the wall. Small size or medium size countries like Canada, Belgium, the Philippines, Mexico, could come together because they had a common goal to get rid of this weapon. And they brokered a deal with a newly created ICBL. And that has been remembered now as the new diplomacy, a well‑organized tandem between an international network of NGOs and a few states willing to achieve a real change.

And that's how the process came into ‑‑ well, it took about five years to convince the entire international community, well, nearly entire international community, because by the end of the day in Ottawa, in December 1997, there were 122 countries, and today there are 164 signatories and parties to this treaty that made anti‑personnel an illegal weapon, and it's the first conventional weapon in human history that has been banned. So it's a real breakthrough, extraordinary breakthrough.

So, to achieve that, we needed mobilization on all fronts, and I show you this. So, this is the pyramid of shoes. For nearly 25 years now, we are every year creating a huge pyramid of shoes to say no. The shoes being the symbol of, of course, all the people who were victims of that kind of weapon. And at the time there were 26,000 new victims every year. Today, thanks to the Ottawa Treaty impact, it went down to 3,000. It's up again to 8,000 to 10,000 because of the contemporary conflict in Syria and a number of countries, of course, those that didn't sign the treaty.

This is, well, just another one. And mind you, we made the pyramid of shoes in front of your Capitol. And that was fantastic because really all the kids gathered there. That was very fantastic because the U.S. campaign to ban landmines was very strong with our friends from Human Rights ‑‑ I didn't mention, but the six NGOs that founded the ICBL were Human Rights Watch Project, Physicians For Human Rights, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, on the American side; and on the European side, Medico International, Mines Advisory Group, and the Handicap International. And the six of us, we moved that campaign forward up to 1,200 affiliated members to the campaign. So that's the same day.

Okay. And that led to the Nobel Peace Prize because the Nobel committee recognized a few months before the signing in Ottawa. They often do that. They come in support of something they consider legitimate, worth it, and they give it a push. And I think together with the support of Lady Di, who talked to the people telling them, you should come in. That was just before she died. She gave us very strong support. Okay. And, of course ‑‑

>> MARSHA TERNUS: You're going to talk about the United States now?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Your beloved President.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Yes?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Listen, put an end ‑‑ you know, this is absurd because Clinton was the precursor for this war business under ‑‑ and Senator Patrick Leahy was a very staunch opponent to the use of that weapon. So, he quite convinced Clinton that the U.S. was ‑‑

>> MARSHA TERNUS: To oppose the use of it.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Leahy wanted a ban.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: He wanted the ban.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: And he nearly convinced Clinton. But the question was about the DMZ zone between the two Koreas, okay. Then there were some changes, but Obama ‑‑ Obama restored quasi‑compliance with the Ottawa Treaty.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Did the U.S. sign the treaty?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Never. But quasi‑compliance. Obama said very clearly, we will ban the production. We will ban the transfer to customers. We will ban the use, but for the DMZ on which he considered there was a future possibility that it will be dismantled. And he said, at such a time we will join the treaty.

And for some reason completely, incomprehensible, suddenly Donald Trump decided to renounce that commitment. So that's very bad news. And we ‑‑ just to mention ‑‑ well, of course, it's very bizarre from a French perspective to see a President coming back on the words of its own administration, maybe not his own, but at least usually foreign commitments are sacred, and you have to ‑‑ and by doing so is also against 164 countries.

So, I can let you appreciate the moral leadership of the United States on that issue. And he's back in good company with China, Cuba, India, Ireland, Myanmar, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam. Those are the countries that refused the treaty. Fair enough.

So, we had a very strong reaction and many Democrats and probably a few Republicans ‑‑ I hope so, at least ‑‑ questioned the decision. There are a list of quotes that are very interesting. In Europe, everybody was furious, so we organized an event there. And this is Broken Chair. Broken Chair is a monument that Handicap International managed to install in front of the Valley of the Flags of the international community just in front of the Place des Nations, which is the core of where people make decisions or should make decisions on our common good. And we got the permission to install this 12‑meter chair with one leg missing, which is a symbol of an unstable world but also the symbol of a missing leg.

And immediately we had this event organized and protest against the decision of Donald Trump. And look at that young lady. She was the one on the mattress I showed you in the Cambodian camp. So, if you could show the little film.

(Video shown)

>> DR. RICHARDIER: So that was in Geneva less than one month ago.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: That's a very effective symbol, the three‑legged chair. The effort that you used, I think you called it the new diplomacy pattern, which I understand to be NGOs pushing governments to live up to the law of war.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: But making an alliance with them.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Yes. Yes.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: That's what makes it very new.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Okay. Now, I know Joseph is probably ready to ask questions. So, we don't have a lot of time, but I do want you to tell our audience about the cluster munitions that you're working on now to hopefully accomplish something similar to what has been done and still is being done with the landmines.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well, cluster munitions, for those who don't know what it is, it's a huge mortar bomb, and inside you have up to 600 or 700 bomblets, bombies, the size of a grenade or a bit bigger, and it's supposed to be from a military perspective a weapon to saturate a zone, saturate, meaning no life after. Life is impossible. I had a little film that we can retrieve from YouTube to show you, but it just shows how damaging cluster bombs can be.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: And I think you told me earlier the big mother bomb ‑‑

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Opens up.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: ‑‑ opens up in the air and then it shoots all these bomblets out.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: About the size of a soccer field is completely contaminated and saturated by fire and death.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: And like the landmines, they don't all go off.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Because it's ‑‑ from a technical perspective, you have to arm up to 600 bomblets at once. So, it's usually done by the ‑‑ it depends on the way in which they're dropped. And if by mistake or for some reason it's done too low, or if it is dropped on a mountainous area, the difference makes it up to 30 percent ‑‑ sometimes even 40 percent do not work.

So, then they are littering the soil, and they are unstable, and they are de facto timers than landmines and much more dangerous than landmines. So just for the record, the Israeli Army, when they occupied the south of Lebanon for several months, they were forced to restore under international pressure. For some reason, just before leaving, four million of those bomblets were dropped.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: And, now, this was in Lebanon?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: South Lebanon.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: And who dropped the bombs?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Israeli forces, among which 200,000 did not explode. So, this is where some of our team are clearing ‑‑ so‑called clearing ‑‑ cluster munitions and landmines. And on Laos, for your memory for you Americans, the American bombers dropped 2.5 million tons of those kind of bombs and bigger ones as well which is more than what was dropped on Germany and Japan total during the second World War.

So, it's now, today, we are clearing Laos, and it's far away from being finished. So, just to show you, this is cluster munitions that we put together for this demonstration in Laos. Sorry, that's in South Sudan. And you can see a house with the owner and the cluster ‑‑ submunition close to the house. And this is difficult to see, but all the little spots, each of them is a submunition of another type. So that gives you an idea of the amount of dysfunction, and each of them are very dangerous.

This is a more sophisticated one in Afghanistan. And this is the map of the bombing over Laos. But, you know, the people from Laos are clever people. Those are bombs they used to build their houses. It was amazing. You could go there. Of course, it was much better than wood, or they would use it to plant whatever or to go in the water. Okay. So, I think that should be out ‑‑ that's the next one.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Okay.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well, this is the story about the political declaration.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Okay.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Having succeeded with the Oslo Convention to ban cluster munition, it's less efficient because it's only 108 countries plus but that are party to, and 13 that are ‑‑ they have signed but have not yet participated. It's a bit complex. But technically speaking, we have a majority of countries.

So, it's illegal, per se. But, you know, on the news that there are several countries where you can see now the total disregard of military operations for Syrians in the towns, in densely populated areas. So, we created yet a new international campaign which is called INAEW for International Network Against Explosive Weapons in densely populated areas.

In other words, please, military folks, respect the international humanitarian law that is ‑‑ has been negotiated just to protect the civilians, civilians from the difficulties inherent to all war. And you can see that what has happened in the Syrian crisis with towns like Homs, Aleppo, Raqqa, Donetsk and now Idleb. It tends to be familiar. I mean, we saw all these towns literally flattened by intense bombings. And this is totally illegal according to the international humanitarian law.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: And it's why we have all the Syrian refugees now.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Of course. But first of all, it's not war. It's a crime. It's clearly a crime. The problem is that when will it be continued? It's not respecting the basic principles that are of the human international humanitarian law that there are ‑‑ that are ‑‑ how do you say it in English ‑‑ distinction, so the duty to be distinctive between Syrians and military, precaution. Whenever the military interest must be sufficiently proven, sufficiently large, to impose to take some risk of collateral damages, so this is very precise.

And proportionality. Proportionality is the comparative advantage between the risk you take for the civilians and the possibility to win the war. All that is not respected nowadays. And you know what? Ironically, into this war, the militaries have become the collateral damages. This is upside down.

So, just a few pictures and a short film to illustrate that, a little film. So this is just to show you the kind of bomb and the power when it's used in a civilian environment, the kind of thing it does. So please, the little film. You will understand what it means. A few words are in French, but don't worry. The sound in the film itself is not great.

(Video shown)

So that campaign we launched, stop bombing civilians, which has been very, very well followed. And we are aiming at not a treaty this time. A political declaration. And you may ask me the difference between the two. A treaty is when a situation is so disastrous that there is a need for a new instrument or because there is a vacuum. A political declaration is something which is meant to invite government to restore their respect of existing treaties. So this is what we are aiming to, well, please respect the Geneva Convention and its protocols, and please ‑‑

>> MARSHA TERNUS: To publicly commit to it.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Exactly. Within the General Assembly of the United Nations usually do that.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Is there anybody here in the U.S. who is advocating for that here?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Yeah. Of course. Of course.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Politicians or NGOs?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well, mainly politicians. We are several NGOs in the U.S., we are teaming up, coming together and trying to convince the politicians, but they hardly listen.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Okay. Just really quickly, where's Joseph? Is he ‑‑ can I ask one more question?

>> MR. JONES: Yes.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: I can't see you from there. Well, I just really want you to address a little bit on your negotiation of the convention on the rights of people with disabilities since that is so dear to Senator Harkin's heart. And this was the convention that Senator Harkin tried so hard to get ‑‑ would it be approved or ratified by the Senate ‑‑ I'm not sure of the exact technical term ‑‑ before he left office. And he came this close to getting it done. Senator McCain partnered with him on that. And I think it was one of the biggest disappointments in talking to him that he's had. So, is there any hope on that front for the U.S.?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well ‑‑

>> MARSHA TERNUS: I know you are a big advocate for it.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: It's difficult because some years back, the U.S. refused to sign the convention on the right, and although it was a real bipartisan effort with, of course, Senator Harkin but also Bob Dole and Senator McCain came to support that, and it was a very close miss. Happily now, when Obama was in charge, he signed the treaty. But now it's more complex than that because you have to go back to a special committee to present your credential, the way you plan to implement the treaty to become party to it. And that means the administration is not going to do it.

So, we'll see. But it's stupid because your own is probably even stronger than the requirement of the convention. So, it's just a matter of staying away from outside pressure and multilateralism, all this that is very detrimental to the common good of people having to share the same plan, but that will come.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Good. I'm glad you have hope. I do, too. I do, too.

Joseph, do you want to come up and see if we have audience questions? I should ask, was there anything that you wanted to add that I missed?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well, no. I mean, I appreciate the time constraint. I was just thinking, I think I would ‑‑ to conclude this ‑‑

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Sure.

>> DR. RICHARDIER: ‑‑ presentation, could you show, please, the film, the last film? Because it tells a lot. It's very moving. And I think it will capture the essence of our endeavor.

(Video shown)

>> DR. RICHARDIER: I find this film extremely powerful because it sensitizes so much of what we're doing, all what will have to be overcome to rebuild this region. People, infrastructure and hospitals and schools and electricity power and dams and social system and economy and investment and ‑‑ because Senator Harkin was very keen to hear me trying to outline the impact not only on individuals but on connectivity. So, I think this film speaks even better than I could ever do.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Thank you so much for sharing your experience and enlightening us about what is going on in these regions and all the suffering that has happened. And for all of us who care about social justice, we appreciate the efforts that you are making so much, and I hope that we, as individuals and collectively, can support the work that you do. And thank you for sharing with us tonight, and thank you on behalf of The Harkin Institute for all of the partnering that you've done with us for disabled people.

[ Applause ]

>> MR. JONES: So we have time for just a few questions. And some of them have been texted in already. How does the Korean DMZ impact U.S. ‑‑

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Joseph?

>> MR. JONES: Can you hear me?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Remember my hearing impairment?

>> MR. JONES: Yes. How does the Korean DMZ impact the U.S. support for anti‑mining efforts?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Well, because ‑‑ this is an interesting question. Because, in fact, some pretend that the U.S. has nothing to do with the DMZ anymore, that this is the South Koreans' responsibility. So technically nothing should vary. I think it's a bit more than that, and in the end, it's partly an enemy ‑‑ not to get into it.

It's also a sense of responsibility of the U.S. over this minefield, and they probably would like to maintain control over it. But you cannot sign a treaty banning a weapon and at the same time ensuring that responsibility is taken care of. So, I personally have sympathy for the middle of the road, the kind of smart compromise President Obama and strong commitment made to have a de facto quasi‑observance of the treaty with a pledge to join it whenever the DMZ problem will be solved. So, nothing more I can say about it. It's too bad they changed it.

>> MR. JONES: Thank you. The second question is, does Honeywell still manufacture landmines?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: I don't know.

>> MR. JONES: Don't know.

>> MARSHA TERNUS: Does somebody out here know?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: I should know and remember in those days, but that's more than 20 years ago. So that's very well possible, but I don't know.

>> MR. JONES: Can you talk to us a little bit about HI's role and desire for employment for people with disabilities and why that's ‑‑ employment for people with disabilities, why that's important to Humanity & Inclusion?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Oh, employment, sorry. Oh, yeah, that's very crucial. I had a few pictures about this because I wanted to show that employment doesn't mean the same. That depends on the environment. Employment ‑‑ first of all, we employ amputees first because we believe that they would go back home and there would be absolutely no services. And what was very great ‑‑ because I went, remember, from obstetrics to being a prosthetist ‑‑ I could see the change in personality ‑‑ a mine victim usually lost everything. Most of the time if he's a husband, he's sent away, divorce, or never get married because he's no longer capable to produce anything to ensure a proper future for their family.

So there are people demolished, literally, by the explosion, and the ordeal that went afterward. And we train those people to manufacture their own prosthetics. So, we made them experts, specialists, and you could see gradually how they were totally ‑‑ they became VIPs. The community that they could prescribe something good for their peers, and that made us understand that beyond the rehabilitation, there is all the benefit of being useful to yourself, to your family, to your community. So that's very simple. If you're not being confronted to that, you don't know.

So, we started to be involved in the projects for microcredits to offer to someone. Most of the time they're illiterate. They have no certification of any kind. So who is going to lend them money? So, there is a need to help them to just upgrade their capacity to invest in offering them, or the tools for a little kitchen to sell food on the streets or the tools to repair bicycles, that kind of employment, self‑employment. And later on, more recently what is in line with The Harkin Institute, we work in Tunisia, for instance, we promote the creation of training for ‑‑ with sewing machines to produce clothes or to repair more sophisticated digital equipment.

And we also make ‑‑ broker deals with the ministries in many countries to facilitate access to the civil servant situation. And also, to encourage the creation of new training for these kind of people who otherwise would never have access to any training.

>> MR. JONES: What percent of landmines worldwide do you think have been cleared?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Oh, a good deal of them. As I said, we went down from 25‑plus thousand to 3,000. But the problem is that it's just impossible to know. Because no country knowing ‑‑ not all countries, although they are supposed to gather the information. So, we have gross approximation. There are hundreds of millions. But we now know the numbers of the stocks that have been destroyed according to the commitment of the Ottawa Treaty. So, if you are interested in that question, you can Google the landmine monitor.

Because one of the strengths of this treaty, it is a treaty under surveillance. The ICBL, the campaign, has created a new body called the landmine manager. And we have 100 researchers that survey all the countries, including those who are not party to it. And every year they are invited to make a self‑declaration to tell how much they destroyed, how much they cleared, what did they do to help the victims, so it's very well documented. And it's a book like this. Now it's on digital. But it was that thick. And all the countries, they can look into their records and also look into their neighbors', so there is a good level of peer relation in this treaty, which is unique. Everybody considers the Ottawa Treaty to be an extraordinary success.

>> MR. JONES: The last question is, are there nonstate actors using landmines?

>> DR. RICHARDIER: Nonstate actors? Of course. That's the main problem. And this is why your President is wrong by making his choice because he's sending a wrong message to the nonstate actors, despite the fact that they're not recognized by the international community or considered as terrorists or whatever, there is an NGO in the Geneva which is called the Geneva, and the specialty is to interact with nonstate actors to invite them to have a de facto policy to accept, to apply for the treaty requirements.

They receive the message that the biggest power in the world is no longer willing to abide to those rules, so it's a very wrong message. And among the states, the list I mentioned, that are hesitating to join the Ottawa Treaty, they will not. But back to your question, of course, there are many, many, many nonstate actors that are using not only mines but de facto mines which are the improvised ‑‑ known as improvised explosive devices that are exactly like mines. Instead of being hidden in the ground, they are hidden on a bridge or wherever the winning troops are arriving, they are facing the hazards of those improvised ‑‑ terrible, terrible things.

>> MR. JONES: Well, I'd like to thank Dr. Richardier for his powerful images and compelling conversation this evening, and thank you for traveling all the way to Iowa to visit with us and be here for the Sussman Lecture.

[ Applause ]

I'd also like to thank our fearless leader, Marsha Ternus, for moderating.

[ Applause ]

And all of The Harkin Institute team for all of their hard work to create this event and all the others that we do throughout the year. This one is special for you because it could be our last event for a while here at the University. We're going to stay positive. Thank you, Scott, for being here. Thank all of you and please stay tuned for upcoming events and activities of The Harkin Institute, and we'll let you know when we know. So please travel safely home and thank you very much for your support.

[ Applause ]